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ABSTRACT

Noting that few curriculum projects designed to teach effective writing skills have been evaluated through carefully planned, longitudinal research studies representing cooperative efforts between university and public school personnel, this report describes such a project. The report outlines (1) the purpose of the program, which was based on the premise that children learn to use language by actively generating it, and the steps in its implementation; (2) the research procedure employed to evaluate the first three years of the program and the results of that research; and (3) a curriculum model that demonstrates an effective working relationship between university and public school personnel. Appendixes contain materials used in the holistic evaluation of student writing samples, notes on building-centered testing programs in writing, and copies of two writing skills checklists. (FL)

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Developing Basic Writing Competencies in the Elementary School: An Example of University and School System Cooperation

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A rapidly expanding literature continues to stimulate inquiry into the processes of learning to write and the better understanding of those processes (Graves, 1977; Loban, 1976; Stallard, 1977). Despite this interest, parents and the community in general have grown more disenchanted with the schools' efforts to teach writing (Shields, 1975; Stone, 1979). Although curriculum projects designed to teach effective writing skills abound, few have been evaluated through carefully-planned, longitudinal research studies that represent cooperative efforts between university and school system personnel. This report describes a successful research-based, cooperative effort to improve the writing skills of elementary school children in the public schools of Highland, Indiana.

A program for written language, The Second R, was developed in 1976 by a committee consisting of classroom teachers, principals and the Director of Elementary Education in the Highland schools. The present report outlines (1) the purposes of the program and steps in its implementation, (2) the research procedure employed to evaluate the first three years of the program and the results of that research, and (3) a curriculum model which demonstrates an effective working relationship between university and public school system personnel.

Highland Writing Program

This new program was based upon the premise that children learn to use language by actively generating language. The new program featured language production as the principal student activity in English classes. The students' own written work and oral expression became the content for language instruction. Textbooks were not used except as handbooks for purposes directly connected with helping students improve their own writing. Growth in fluency and ease of expression was the primary goal of the program. The mechanics of writing and transcribing skills were to be learned gradually in the process of generating written language.

Instruction directed at improving speaking and writing was based upon what children could do, building on their language accomplishments, and following their natural language learning processes. Children's original writing was used by the teacher to diagnose students' writing abilities and to prescribe appropriate instructional strategies. Individual student writing also became the basis for writing conferences between teacher and learner. During these conferences teachers provided students with feedback on both the content and mechanics of their writing and discussed plans for future writing activities.

Because children of the same grade level were at different learning stages and required different kinds of instruction to insure continuous and cumulative progress, the program was organized by phases rather than by grade levels. The Highland Language Arts Committee identified objectives for each of six phases for children in the elementary grades. These objectives were stated at "readiness," "teaching," and "maintenance" levels. For example, for most children, the use of the semicolon was at the "readiness" level during Phase IV (third and fourth grades). Students at this level would note its use, and some would attempt to use the semicolon in their writing. As students entered Phase V, most would be at the "teaching" level with regard to the semicolon. During this time the teacher would make a systematic effort to be certain that the students recognized a semicolon and to help them insert this punctuation mark appropriately into their writing. During Phase VI and subsequent grade levels, the semicolon was at the "maintenance" level for most students. At this time students would be expected to use the semicolon correctly.

Because the Highland writing program was based upon the assumption that children learn to write by writing, the frequency of writing was vital. Daily practice was considered essential, with students getting feedback about their efforts and using this feedback to rewrite and revise their work. Each student was expected to produce two pieces of original writing each week. Folders containing samples of children's writing served as a cumulative record of each child's growth in writing. Samples from the beginning, middle, and end of each school year were placed in each student's

folder as part of a cumulative record kept throughout the student's school years. These folders allowed the teacher and the students to focus on trends, to note progress, and to identify areas needing improvement. They also provided a basis for planning future work for the student. Students' writing samples were passed along to the next teacher as the children moved from one grade level to another and became the basis for natural next steps in the writing process.

The Implementation of the Program

The new program for written language was implemented in the elementary schools during the 1976-77 school year. In the fall of 1977 two Purdue University Calumet faculty members agreed to cooperate with the Highland Schools in an effort to evaluate the effectiveness of their new writing program. The initial step in this cooperative venture was a workshop for all elementary school principals conducted by one of the Purdue Calumet professors. Since the prinicipals had a major responsibility in helping teachers implement the program, it seemed important to discuss with them ideas for working with individual teachers and to provide them with practical suggestions for in-service activities. Among the topics discussed at this workshop were (a) techniques for analyzing student writing samples, (b) procedures for giving students feedback on both the content and mechanics of their written expression, and (c) motivational ideas to encourage both original and creative writing activities. The plan for an on-going, system-wide evaluation procedure that would provide tangible bases for reporting and remodeling the writing program in the future evolved out of the discussion at this workshop. Shortly after the workshop, the Highland Schools Superintendent invited the university professors to direct the evaluation project in cooperation with school system personnel.

During the spring of 1978 the university professors met regularly with the Superintendent, the Director of Elementary Education, and members of the Language Arts Committee to develop a research design and to plan its implementation. It seemed appropriate to evaluate fluency of written expression by analyzing students' original writing for such factors as ideas, content, organization, vocabulary, and sentence

structure. It was also decided that the best way to ascertain whether or not students had mastered specific writing skills was to sample their actual writing (as opposed to having them take a spelling test or a punctuation test).

The First Year Evaluation

The first system-wide evaluation occurred during the spring of 1978. Writing samples of 607 randomly selected students in grades three through six were chosen for analysis. The final spring entry in the students' writing folders provided one of the writing samples. In addition, during May of 1978 all students were asked to write an essay or story on a common set of topics under normal classroom writing conditions. This in-class writing sample was also analyzed. Thus the samples for analysis consisted of (a) one folder sample (writing that had been revised and re-written under the supervision of the teacher), and (b) one in-class sample (extemporaneous writing). The analysis of the folder and in-class samples was conducted under the supervision of the Purdue Calumet professors by readers hired and trained by them. The analysis included both holistic evaluations (for example, " general merit" and "organization" were rated) and specific evaluations on a Writing Skills Checklist (e.g., "Begins sentences with capital letters.") Copies of the rating sheet and checklist are included in Appendix A & B.

The first year's evaluation revealed some areas that required attention. For example, it was obvious that the writing program had been unevenly implemented throughout the system. Some teachers appeared to be following program guidelines, while others continued to "do their own thing." In addition, the evaluators often found it difficult to evaluate folder data because writing samples were not always dated nor kept in order. Finally, in the absence of baseline data, it was difficult to ascertain how effective the program really was. For example, if 72 percent of the sixth graders consistently capitalized proper nouns, was this good or bad?

The absence of baseline data forced the evaluators to use a criterion-referenced format for reporting their results. They identified the following three categories of strengths and weaknesses:

1. Areas of Extreme Strength. These indicated objectives mastered by 90 percent or more of the students at the grade levels where writing program objectives indicated mastery should occur for most students. There were seven instances of these.
2. Areas of Weakness. These were objectives either (a) mastered by fewer than 50 percent of the students when the skill was at the teaching level, or (b) mastered by fewer than 75 percent of the students when the skill was supposed to be at the maintenance level. There were 19 instances of these.

3. Areas of Retrogression of Skill Development. These were objectives which reached a high degree of mastery one year and then dropped during the next year. (For example fourth graders did not capitalize the first word of a sentence with as much accuracy as did third graders.) There were five instances of these.

The areas of strength, weakness, and retrogression are summarized in Tables 1 to 3.

Insert Tables 1 to 3 here

The Second Year

Early in the 1978-79 school year the university professors presented and interpreted their findings to school administrators, members of the Language Arts Committee, and to all elementary teachers. With each group, the overall results and the information in Tables 1 to 3 were discussed in detail. They urged full program implementation, with increases in the amount and variety of writing, in specific feedback to students, and in diagnostic-prescriptive instruction based on needs directly observed in students' writing.

The following in-service activities were conducted during 1978-79 by school system personnel in response to these recommendations.

1. Grade level workshops were conducted with emphasis on full implementation of the program, techniques for sentence improvement, punctuating "by voice," revision, and holistic scoring.
2. A fall writing sample (compositions on common themes by grade level, system-wide) was administered along with tests on punctuation and capitalization and on commonly misspelled words.
3. Teachers by grade levels, used holistic scoring to rate fall writing sample compositions; they also compiled lists of strengths and weaknesses observed in the scoring.
4. Writing Memos, grade level exercises directed to improvement of specific skills, were distributed for use in classes during most of the second semester.
5. Spring writing samples were administered and scored; spelling tests were repeated.
6. Writing folders were maintained by including one composition per quarter, plus spring and fall samples.

The 1979 evaluation analyzed the writing of the same students who had progressed to subsequent grades and an added group starting the third grade. During this evaluation, the Writing Skills Checklist was shortened, focusing only on key topics. Only the in-class essay (not an essay from the folder) was analyzed. This second stage of the evaluation showed significant overall improvements indicating substantial growth in writing performance from year to year and also at grade levels. All the areas of weakness and retrogression showed improvement; and areas of strength increased These results are presented later, in Table 4.

The Third Year

The evaluators presented the results of the second stage of the analysis to the Superintendent, the Director of Elementary Education, and the Chairperson of the Language Arts Committee. They recommended that the findings again be communicated to all elementary teachers and that in-service activities continue. A report that summarized the evaluation effort and compared student progress in written expression over the two-year period was distributed to all elementary principals and teachers early in the 1979-80 year. However, no feedback-oriented workshop was provided for the teachers or staff. During that year teachers continued to follow the guidelines established for the writing program and to work toward program goals. However, no in-service efforts directed specifically at the writing program were conducted.

In the spring of 1980, in-class writing samples of all available students who had previously been tested, plus a new group of third graders, were analyzed using the same checklists and rating sheets as in the previous year.

Summary Analysis of the First Three Years

At the end of the 1979-1980 school year, directly comparable results were available from three testing occasions: spring 1978, spring 1979, and spring 1980. By analyzing and comparing these results, it is possible to determine the overall effectiveness of the program. Table 4 presents the results of the checklist which analyzed mastery of specific skills. (Skills which appeared on the checklist but were needed in too few essays to provide a meaningful analysis are omitted from this table.) Reliability of the checklist as a measure of mastery was estimated by computing the percentage of agreement between independent readers. Median reliability was 92.7% agreement.

The results for 1978 represent the performance of the students at the end of the first year of the program. At that time, no feedback had been provided to the teachers. In the fall of 1978, the results and accompanying recommendations were presented to the teachers. One of the recommendations was that greater care should be given to see to it that students actually wrote compositions which required a wide

Insert Table 4 about here

variety of the basic skills the students were supposed to be learning at a given time. The numbers in parentheses in Table 4 indicate the percentage of pupils whose compositions required the use of specific skills. In a large number of cases, the percentage of students needing or attempting a skill increased dramatically between the 1978 and 1979 testing occasions. In fact, Table 4 shows 21 instances in which the percentage of pupils employing a certain skill increased by 10 percent or more and only 2 instances of a drop of 10 percent between these two testing occasions. This trend continued and even accelerated the next year. Between 1979 and 1980, there were 28 cases of an increase of 10 percent or more in usage, and only 4 instances of a 10 percent or more decrease. Based on Table 4, therefore, it seems quite clear the writing program encouraged pupils to write compositions requiring a wider variety of skills. This is an important outcome, since the whole logic of the Highland Writing Program is to have the students learn by doing. If they are doing more, they are being exposed to more opportunities to learn.

Table 4 also shows a dramatic increase between 1978 and 1979 in the percentage of students who performed specific skills <u>correctly.</u> This table reveals 62 instances of an improvement of 10 or more percentage points, and only 8 instances of an equally large decrease between 1978 and 1979.

This large number of improvements is rendered more impressive by the fact that these increases in percentage of correct performance occurred while the percentage of students attempting each skill was likewise increasing. In other words, between the 1978 and 1979 testing occasions, more students tried the various skills and more of these mastered the skills.

Between 1979 and 1980, however, there were only 16 instances of scores increasing an <u>additional</u> 10 percentage points or more. In 39 cases, on the other hand, mastery <u>dropped</u> by 10 or more percentage points. This result has to be interpreted in the light of a "ceiling effect." If a skill was mastered in 1979 by more than 90 percent of the students, it was by definition impossible for further improvements of 10 percentage points to occur.

In spite of this ceiling effect, the 1980 results were disappointing to the school system administrators. Of the 39 decrements, there were 29 cases of the 1980 performance actually falling below the 1978 performance. The disappointment in this finding was somewhat mitigated by the realization that more students were trying most skills in 1980 compared to 1978. Therefore, in a large number of cases, there were actually more students successfully mastering these skills in 1980; but the percentage of correct mastery was brought down by the additional number of students who tried skills in 1980 but failed to use the skills correctly. Nevertheless, the 1980 results did not indicate a continuation of the favorable trend found in 1979.

The results presented in Table 4 are based on a non-longitudinal analysis. The students in a given grade in one year are merely compared to the students in the same grade during the subsequent two years. A longitudinal analysis (not presented in this report) was also performed. The results showed an almost identical pattern.

These results emphasize the importance of feedback to the teachers and follow-up activities as a part of such a writing program. Feedback on the entire set of results was provided between the 1978 and 1979 testing occasions, but not between the 1979 and 1980 occasions. The students improved when the teachers had feedback, but they regressed when detailed feedback was not provided. Additional support for the usefulness of feedback can be found in a more specific examination of the 1980 data. Of the 16 instances of further increases of 10 or more percentage points between 1979 and 1980, 10 of these occurred in handwriting skills. This area had been a disappointing one the previous year. Although detailed feedback on the overall results was not communicated to the teachers during the 1978-1979 school year, additional workships were given to the teachers on how to teach handwriting skills. The fact that there were 10 improvements and no decrements in handwriting the next year suggests that the teachers reacted to this feedback and that the students in turn responded to the teachers' altered emphasis.

Table 5 presents the results of the ratings of general skills from the rating sheet. These results show that on most General Merit Skills (dealing largely with ideas and organization), the students showed a slight improvement between 1978 and 1979 and a sharper improvement between 1979 and 1980. On the other hand, the Mechanics and Transcribing skills (such as punctuation and usage) showed a sharp increase between 1978 and 1979 and a smaller increase between 1979 and 1980.

Insert Table 5 about here

The Transcribing Results from Table 5 are easily compatible with the results from Table 4. Mastery of specific transcribing skills improved sharply between 1978 and 1979 and only slightly between 1979 and 1980. The General Merit results, although not specifically confirmed by other data, are likewise compatible with the Table 4 data. It is quite plausible that General Merit and Transcribing skills could be improving in non-parallel patterns. Table 5 (like Table 4) is based on a non-longitudinal analysis of the data. A longitudinal analysis (not presented in this report) provided essentially the same results. (The median inter-rater reliability for the scales on the rating sheet was .65. Although higher reliability would be desirable for individual diagnosis, the scales were considered useful for group research.)

Table 6 presents the results of the vocabulary and spelling analysis. Range of vocabulary was estimated by obtaining a list of 449 commonly used words (Fitzgerald, 1951) and counting the number of words in the first fifty words of the essay which were not on the list. This was thought to be a reasonable estimate of "applied vocabulary." (This score correlated .18 with IQ and .16 with reading ability. Both coefficients are significant at the .01 level.) The results show that vocabulary improved substantially between 1978 and 1979, but decreased slightly between 1979 and 1980. These results are parallel to the basic skills results from the checklist (Table 4).

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Insert Table 6 about here

Spelling ability was assessed by counting the number of spelling errors per 100 words. Two spelling scores were obtained in this manner. "Spelling errors on list" refers to the number of times the student misspelled a word taken from the list of 100 frequently misspelled words compiled by Johnson (1950). "Spelling errors beyond list" refers to the number of times a student misspelled a word not on this list. Words on the list were assumed to be easier than the words beyond the list. The two measures of spelling ability correlated .46 with each other, and -.20 and -.30 with IQ. All three of these coefficients are significant at the .01 level. As Table 6 shows, all the groups showed substantial improvements in spelling ability between 1978 and 1979 and maintained these gains between 1979 and 1980.

Finally, "fluency" was assessed by counting the number of thought units and determining the average number of words per thought unit. It was assumed that as students became more fluent, they would show an increased number of words per thought unit. Although a high degree of reliability was attained in the assessment of thought units and words-per-essay (.88 and .99, respectively), the fluency measure yielded no significant data. Logically, fluency should correlate to some degree with IQ or reading ability, but this was not the case. (The correlations were .08 with IQ and .07 with reading ability.) Likewise, fluency failed to correlate with any of the measures of General Merit. For this reason, the lack of significant results shown in Table 7 should be viewed more as a reflection of the inadequacy of the concept of "fluency" as it was operationally defined than as an indication of a failure to achieve a major goal of the program.

Insert Table 7 about here

The most improvement-oriented data to emerge from the study are shown in Tables 8 and 9. Since many of the same students were measured in 1978 and in 1980, it was possible to make a longitudinal comparison between the 1978 performance and the performance of the same students in 1980. Table 8 shows the results of such a comparison. In

1978, each student was rated either as (a) having "no rating" with regard to a given skill--usually because the skill was not needed in the essay; as (b) having "not mastered" the skill--by needing it and failing to implement the skill correctly; or as (c) having "mastered" the skill. Table 8 shows the percentages of students falling into each of these 1978 categories who mastered the skills when retested in 1980.

Insert Table 8 about here

In interpreting Table 8, it is useful to say that students who had "mastered" a skill in both 1978 and 1980 had "retained" that skill. On the other hand, students rated in 1978 as "not needing" or "not mastering" a skill can be regarded as having "learned" that skill if they displayed mastery in 1980. Thus, for each skill in Table 8, the top two lines can be said to represent "learning" and the third line "retention." For example, with regard to "capitalizing Proper Nouns," 98% of Group I, 98% of Group II, 97% of Group III and 94% of Group IV demonstrated "retention" of this skill. Likewise, percentages of students ranging from 81% to 100% who had not previously mastered this skill had "learned" to capitalize proper nouns correctly by 1980.

By examining each skill in Table 8, it was possible for the Highland staff to determine areas where specific emphasis was needed. The areas of strengh and weakness are summarized in Table 9. In this table, "learning" was considered to be"high" if the median 1980 performance for those who had not mastered a skill or had no rating in 1978 was above 80%. "Learning" was rated as "moderate" if the median score from Table 8 fell between 61% and 79%. "Learning" was rated as "low" if the median score from Table 8 fell below 60%. Likewise, retention was rated as "high" if the median retention score from Table 8 fell above 90%, as "moderate" if the median retention score fell between 80% and 89%, and as "low" if the retention score fell below 80%. By placing all the abilities on the retention-learning matrix in Table 9, it is possible to obtain a good profile of the overall success of the writing program.

with regard to each of the specific skills.

Insert Table 9 about here

Although Table 9 provides an interesting overall view of the program, it is actually more useful to look at Table 8 to draw specific recommendations for the program. This is because the need for a skill to be learned or maintained at any given level has to be ralated to the goals of the program. If a skill is supposed to be at a maintainance level and is not being reatined or learned, this is an indication that greater emphasis needs to be directed to that skill at that level.

Note that Table 9 reflects the degree of success of the writing program without feedback between 1979 and 1980. Earlier in this report, it was demonstrated that specific feedback to the teachers greatly enhanced the effectiveness of the program. It is possible that had feedback been continued, the profile in Table 9 would be quite different. When feedback is provided in the future, the Table 9 format will be used. Since Tables 8 and 9 are longitudinal analyses employing a baseline (which was absent in Tables 1 to 3), it is likely that this altered format will enhance the value of the feedback.

Additional analyses (not reported in detail in this paper) were performed by breaking the students down into ability groups at each grade level and determining whether there were differences in performance of the high-, medium-, and low-ability students. Such a breakdown was performed on the basis of both reading ability and IQ scores. These analyses showed no unusual patterns. In nearly all cases the high-ability students performed better than the medium ability students, and these in turn performed better than the low-ability students. Moreover, from year to year the rate of improvement for all the ability groups was roughly parallel. Note that even though no interaction was found, this further breakdown did provide useful information to the school system. Some of the teachers and staff had been concerned that the program might be useful for one ability group at a given grade level but not for another

ability group at that same level. The additional analyses suggested that the program worked equally well for students at all ability levels.

A Model of Writing Skills Development

The results presented in this paper indicate that it is possible to use the students' own writing and teacher feedback about this writing as a basis for developing a successful writing program. The effectiveness of such a program is enhanced when feedback is provided both to the students by the teacher and to the teacher by some outside evaluator. In the present study, this outside evaluation and feedback was provided by university personnel; but it seems plausible that other agents could provide this component with equal effectiveness. The key points are that (1) students are able to direct their activities toward self-improvement when the teacher provides feedback about their ongoing attempts, and (2) teachers are able to provide their feedback and instruction more effectively when feedback is available to direct their ongoing activity.

When such a writing program is carried out without the outside evaluation and feedback component, the interactions of the students and teachers can be described by the model shown in Figure 1. In such a model, the student writes a composition, the teacher analyzes the composition and provides feedback to the student, and the student incorporates this feedback into future compositions. By repeating this process, the student develops successful writing skills.

Insert Figure 1 about here

This model can be altered by adding the outside evaluation and feedback component, as shown in Figure 2. In this model, the student still receives feedback from the teacher, but the nature of the feedback from the teacher is determined not only by the student's writing, but also by feedback from the teacher's supervisors based on an overall analysis of the writing of all the students.

Insert Figure 2 about here

A final alteration of the model can be made by adding a feedback line from the evaluator directly to the teacher, as shown in Figure 3. In this case, the teacher bases instructional decisions not only on an analysis of the student's writing and feedback from the teacher's supervisors, but also on direct feedback from the outside evaluator to the teacher.

Insert Figure 3 about here

The 1978 data in the present study represent an implementation of the model shown in Figure 1. These data indicate that the students achieved many useful goals through the implementation of this teacher-feedback model. However, the 1979 data, which followed the implementation of the model shown in Figure 3, indicated that the students could achieve substantially higher levels of competency when the feedback was intensified through the addition of outside evaluators reporting both to the administrators and to the teachers. Finally, the 1980 data represent an implementation of the model shown in Figure 2, in which the outside evaluators provide only indirect feedback to the teachers. The results discussed throughout this report indicate that all three of the models lead to the acquisition of useful writing skills, but that the intensive model shown in Figure 3 leads to the greatest degree of mastery of writing skills.

The reason for the superiority of the Intensive Feedback model shown in Figure 3 over the minimal feedback model shown in Figure 1 is fairly obvious. It seems likely that teachers would be able to devise more appropriate instruction for students if not only the students' writing but also an impartial assessment of the progress of the strengths and weaknesses of the current writing program was available to help design this instruction. For example, feedback that students throughout the entire

program were having difficulty with capitalizing proper nouns would alert teachers to look for opportunities to strenghten this skill in their students' writing.

There are likewise several factors which could explain the superiority of the Intensive Feedback model over the intermediate model shown in Figure 2. First of all, it seems likely that since the feedback from the evaluators comes to the teachers only indirectly in Figure 2, it might "lose something in the translation." In addition, it seems likely that bringing in specialists from outside might enhance the quality of the feedback in the eyes of the teachers. Finally, there's an obvious additive effect; the feedback comes from two sources rather than a single source. The teachers are therefore given additional opportunities to analyze and reflect upon the feedback.

Even if it were possible to have the supervisors and administrators provide all the feedback from the evaluators to the teachers, it might not be cost-effective to do so. Except in large school systems which employ specialists who could routinely perform the data collection and analysis necessary to provide the evaluation and feedback, it would probably require extraordinary effort for the regular supervisory and administrative personnel to become thoroughly familiar with the data in order to give it the most effective presentation to the teachers. On the other hand, it would be equally unrealistic to expect the outside evaluators to become thoroughly familiar with the curriculum and objectives of the school system to such a degree as to be able to integrate the data as effectively as possible into the curriculum. Once the evaluators have conducted the data, however, it requires only a minimal additional expenditure to have them present the results in a meaningful manner to <u>both</u> the teachers and the administrators and supervisors. This is probably a very cost-effective way to adapt the feedback as quickly as possible to the needs of the school system.

Summary and Conclusions

The present study shows that it is possible to help elementary school students develop effective written expression skills by encouraging them to write and providing them feedback on their performance. Such a program becomes more successful, however, if not only the students but also the teachers receive the benefit

of feedback with regard to the performance of the students in the program. The implementation of an Intensive Feedback model which provides direct interactions between student and teacher but also additional objective feedback upon which the teacher can base instructional decisions appears to provide the most suitable environment for students to develop their writing skills by actively engaging in writing.

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TABLE 1

Areas of Extreme Strength--1978
(Skills mastered by 90 percent or more of students at the grade levels indicated)

Forms all cursive letters correctly	(At grades three, five, and six)
Capitalize first word in a sentence	(At grade six)
Capitalize the word "I"	(At grades three, four, five, and six)
Capitalize names of holidays, months, and days of the week	(At grade six)
Period at end of the sentence	(At grade six)
Comma before the year in writing a date, and also after the year within a sentence	(At grades five and six)
Exclamation Mark	(At grades three and five)

TABLE 2-A

Areas of Weakness--1978
(Skills below 50 percent level of mastery at the teaching stage)

Size of small cursive letters	(At grade four)
Size of capital and tall cursive letters	(At grades three and four)
Loop below line for cursive letters	(At grade four)
Comma for pause within sentence	(At grade five)
Comma in compound sentence	(At grades five and six)
Question Mark	(At grade three)
Apostrophe with possessives	(At grades three and four)
Hyphen for hyphenated words	(At grade six)
Stylistic form of composition	(At grades three and four)

TABLE 2-B

Areas of Weakness--1978
(Skills below 75 percent level of mastery at the maintenance stage)

Cursive writing skills	(At grades five and six)
Period at end of sentence	(At grade four)
Question Mark	(At grades three and four)
Comma with direct quotes	(At grade six)
Apostrophe with contractions	(At grades four, five, and six)
Apostrophe for possessives	(At grades five and six)
Margins in composition	(At grades five and six)

TABLE 3

Areas of Retrogression of Skill Development--1978

Cursive Writing Skills

Skill development followed similar pattern. Began high at grade three, dropped sharply at grade four, improved at grades five and six, returning to approximately same level as grade three.

Capitalize first word in a sentence

Began high at grade three, dropped at grade four, returned to high level at grade five and continued to improve at grade six.

Period to end a sentence

Followed same pattern as Cursive Writing skills described above.

Comma to signal a natural pause between parts of a compound sentence

Began low at grade three, improved in grade four, regressed slightly at grade five, and improved greatly at grade six.

Apostrophe in writing contrations

Began high at grade three, improved slightly at grade four, returned to grade three level at grade five and improved slightly at grade six.

Table 4

Non-Longitudinal Analysis of Specific Skills
from Mastery Checklist

Forms letters correctly	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6
1978	92.5 (98)	84.4 (100)	91.7 (98)	93.0 (100)
1979	92.1 (99)	85.8 (100)	63.0 (99)	90.7 (99)
1980	93.2 (99)	98.8 (99)	98.8 (99)	97.3 (99)
Size and alignment				
1978	26.9 (98)	25.7 (100)	45.5 (98)	49.0 (100)
1979	50.0 (99)	72.8 (97)	67.8 (99)	75.9 (100)
1980	93.7 (98)	86.0 (99)	87.9 (100)	92.0 (99)
Spaces letters correctly				
1978	84.9 (98)	56.9 (100)	79.5 (99)	83.0 (100)
1979	48.8 (99)	87.3 (100)	76.2 (100)	86.8 (99)
1980	86.9 (99)	93.9 (94)	99.4 (100)	94.7 (100)
Correct slant				
1978	80.1 (97)	58.4 (99)	73.0 (99)	81.0 (100)
1979	62.7 (91)	84.8 (100)	75.5 (100)	83.2 (99)
1980	97.0 (87)	87.2 (99)	86.1 (100)	85.1 (100)
Capitalizes proper nouns				
1978	57.4 (46)	58.3 (65)	59.0 (50)	72.3 (47)
1979	85.0 (81)	90.3 (89)	70.4 (37)	93.8 (75)
1980	90.9 (63)	98.5 (80)	88.7 (87)	95.3 (93)
First word in sentence				
1978	86.9 (99)	81.4 (100)	87.0 (100)	96.0 (100)
1979	98.2 (99)	100.0 (99)	96.5 (98)	96.3 (99)
1980	97.4 (98)	94.5 (99)	97.1 (99)	99.1 (100)
Pronoun "I"				
1978	98.6 (97)	98.8 (98)	100.0 (93)	99.0 (98)
1979	100.0 (95)	98.9 (95)	98.5 (90)	100.0 (99)
1980	98.4 (98)	100.0 (99)	100.0 (96)	98.2 (97)
Period--End of Sentence				
1978	81.9 (99)	75.4 (100)	81.1 (99)	91.8 (98)
1979	96.3 (99)	99.5 (100)	91.7 (99)	97.2 (100)
1980	73.4 (98)	79.3 (99)	65.9 (100)	62.5 (98)
Question Mark				
1978	36.4 (10)	54.5 (7)	25.0 (3)	0.0 (4)
1979	57.8 (27)	85.7 (14)	50.0 (7)	91.7 (11)
1980	50.0 (29)	41.8 (41)	62.7 (43)	68.6 (45)
Comma in series				
1978	58.1 (43)	68.1 (43)	75.0 (55)	88.1 (59)
1979	79.5 (47)	86.5 (38)	87.6 (61)	93.9 (61)
1980	72.3 (24)	82.5 (24)	79.1 (61)	76.1 (41)

Table 4 (continued)

	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6
Comma--Nonrestrictive Clause				
1978	9.0 (46)	9.4 (63)	21.6 (60)	51.5 (66)
1979	29.3 (45)	29.1 (72)	39.7 (82)	67.2 (54)
1980	12.8 (81)	12.3 (94)	14.6 (95)	18.4 (100)
Comma--Compound Sentence				
1978	13.8 (50)	25.0 (57)	23.1 (53)	41.5 (53)
1979	20.4 (65)	41.2 (67)	40.0 (78)	71.7 (85)
1980	13.7 (65)	16.0 (87)	21.4 (89)	16.4 (96)
Comma with Quotations				
1978	41.7 (5)	58.3 (7)	50.0 (3)	50.0 (2)
1979	55.6 (22)	60.9 (12)	62.5 (5)	77.8 (8)
1980	28.0 (52)	42.2 (54)	58.2 (71)	69.6 (61)
Exclamation Mark				
1978	96.2 (12)	84.2 (11)	90.9 (9)	83.3 (6)
1979	88.1 (25)	97.4 (19)	92.3 (18)	95.5 (20)
1980	93.8 (33)	92.3 (39)	95.9 (42)	93.8 (42)
Quotation Marks				
1978	53.8 (16)	53.3 (9)	66.7 (5)	50.0 (2)
1979	48.2 (34)	69.7 (17)	70.6 (12)	78.9 (18)
1980	31.1 (55)	49.5 (61)	65.6 (74)	69.9 (64)
Apostrophe with Contractions				
1978	65.8 (51)	67.3 (60)	65.6 (73)	69.9 (73)
1979	78.1 (63)	89.1 (75)	88.8 (67)	84.6 (72)
1980	79.9 (70)	89.4 (80)	84.4 (78)	87.2 (82)
Apostrophe with Possessives				
1978	37.0 (12)	38.7 (19)	47.6 (17)	75.0 (12)
1979	40.0 (27)	43.9 (26)	8.0 (17)	57.9 (18)
1980	29.9 (40)	30.8 (39)	21.2 (19)	44.1 (30)
Semicolon				
1978	0.0 (9)	0.0 (13)	0.0 (4)	0.0 (4)
1979	100.0 (1)	50.0 (1)	0.0 (1)	0.0 (1)
1980	33.3 (2)	100.0 (1)	0.0 (2)	25.0 (4)
Colon				
1978	100.0 (1)	100.0 (1)	--- (0)	--- (0)
1979	71.4 (4)	90.5 (11)	75.0 (8)	88.9 (8)
1980	22.2 (5)	66.7 (6)	80.0 (9)	55.6 (16)
Hyphenated Word				
1978	43.8 (7)	25.0 (12)	80.0 (4)	42.9 (14)
1979	66.7 (16)	51.5 (17)	45.0 (14)	48.0 (23)
1980	69.2 (7)	58.3 (7)	44.4 (18)	62.5 (21)

Table 4 (continued)

	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6
Hyphen--end of line				
1978	33.3 (15)	60.0 (15)	63.2 (15)	86.7 (15)
1979	92.3 (16)	84.6 (20)	92.3 (18)	93.8 (30)
1980	64.5 (16)	58.3 (22)	86.8 (22)	75.6 (36)
Parentheses				
1978	57.1 (3)	66.7 (4)	50.0 (2)	100.0 (4)
1979	88.9 (5)	91.7 (6)	91.7 (8)	100.0 (12)
1980	50.0 (2)	80.0 (3)	91.7 (14)	100.0 (11)
Underlining				
1978	--- (0)	33.3 (1)	100.0 (1)	--- (0)
1979	85.7 (4)	100.0 (1)	100.0 (3)	75.0 (4)
1980	66.7 (2)	100.0 (1)	75.0 (2)	80.0 (4)
Headings correct				
1978	0.0 (*81)	0.0 (*49)	0.0 (*76)	0.0 (*75)
1979	100.0 (100)	100.0 (99)	99.3 (100)	100.0 (100)
1980	99.5 (100)	98.8 (99)	98.3 (100)	100.0 (99)
Paragraphing				
1978	31.8 (99)	44.0 (99)	44.7 (100)	45.0 (100)
1979	16.4 (100)	56.1 (99)	93.2 (100)	94.4 (100)
1980	81.3 (100)	93.3 (93)	94.3 (100)	92.9 (99)
Fragments (eliminated)				
1978	57.8 (*74)	35.4 (*76)	54.3 (*75)	70.7 (*75)
1979	82.9 (99)	91.4 (100)	72.4 (99)	78.4 (98)
1980	57.3 (100)	57.6 (100)	46.8 (100)	50.9 (97)
Runons (eliminated)				
1978	66.0 (*74)	66.1 (*76)	63.0 (*75)	69.3 (*75)
1979	74.4 (99)	84.1 (99)	65.8 (99)	75.2 (98)
1980	33.3 (100)	38.2 (100)	28.9 (100)	31.3 (98)

Percentages outside parentheses are percentages of pupils whose compositions required a given skill and who displayed mastery of that skill.

Numbers in parentheses indicate percentage who wrote compositions requiring a given skill and therefore making it possible to evaluate performance.

*The percentages with asterisks are low because of a recording discrepancy, not because the pupils failed to use these skills.

Table 5

Non-Longitudinal Analysis
of
General Skills from Rating Sheet

	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6
General Merit				
1978	16.5	17.6	17.8	20.1
1979	17.1	18.9	16.9	20.6
1980	22.0	21.0	20.3	21.5
Ideas				
1978	5.9	6.2	6.4	6.9
1979	6.3	6.6	6.1	7.1
1980	7.3	6.9	6.9	7.2
Organization				
1978	5.3	5.5	5.7	6.4
1979	4.9	5.6	5.2	6.5
1980	7.5	7.0	6.7	7.2
Wording				
1978	2.7	2.9	2.9	3.3
1979	2.8	3.4	2.8	3.4
1980	3.6	3.5	3.4	3.6
Flavor				
1978	2.7	3.0	3.0	3.5
1979	3.1	3.3	2.8	3.6
1980	3.6	3.5	3.7	3.6
Sentence structure				
1978	4.9	5.1	5.4	6.2
1979	6.4	6.9	5.3	6.1
1980	7.0	7.2	7.0	7.6
Usage				
1978	2.8	2.7	3.1	3.2
1979	3.4	4.1	3.4	3.6
1980	3.9	4.1	3.7	4.0
Mechanics and Transcribing skills				
1978	11.7	12.0	12.3	13.5
1979	13.6	16.5	14.2	15.4
1980	16.0	15.8	15.3	15.5
Punctuation				
1978	2.7	2.7	2.9	3.2
1979	3.4	4.5	3.5	3.5
1980	3.4	3.1	3.1	3.0

Table 5 (continued)

	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6
Capitalization				
1978	3.2	3.4	3.3	3.6
1979	4.0	4.9	4.4	4.5
1980	4.4	4.6	4.3	4.5
Spelling				
1978	2.9	3.1	3.2	3.6
1979	3.3	4.5	3.6	4.1
1980	4.2	4.3	4.1	4.1
Handwriting				
1978	2.9	2.8	3.0	3.1
1979	2.8	2.6	2.7	3.6
1980	4.0	3.9	3.7	3.8

Table 6

Non-Longitudinal Analysis
of
Vocabulary and Spelling Ability

	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6
Vocabulary Words Beyond List				
1978	7.1	8.2	10.4	12.10
1979	12.8	13.3	13.8	11.9
1980	11.1	11.1	11.3	11.6
Spelling Errors from list (per 100 words)				
1978	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.5
1979	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.2
1980	0.7	0.4	0.3	0.2
Spelling errors beyond list (per 100 words)				
1978	2.7	2.4	2.0	1.6
1979	2.6	2.2	1.6	0.9
1980	1.6	1.3	1.2	1.1

Table 7

Non-Longitudinal Analysis
of
Fluency Scores

	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6
1978	10.2	10.4	10.7	11.2
1979	7.6	10.8	9.4	12.1
1980	7.7	8.1	8.0	8.7

Table 8

New Learning and Retention
(Longitudinal Analysis)

	Group I (3rd gr. in 78 5th gr. in 80)	Group II (4th gr. in 78 6th gr. in 80)	Group III (5th gr. in 78 7th gr. in 80)	Group IV (6th gr. in 78 8th gr. in 80)
Forms letters correctly				
No rating in 1978	100*	---	0*	---
Not mastered in 1978	92	95	90	100*
Mastered in 1978	99	99	97	98
Size and alignment of letters				
No rating in 1978	100*	---	100*	---
Not mastered in 1978	89	91	89	84
Mastered in 1978	87	97	98	100
Spaces letters correctly				
No rating in 1978	100*	---	100*	---
Not mastered in 1978	96	96	95	85
Mastered in 1978	100	95	100	98
Correct slant				
No rating in 1978	100*	100*	100*	---
Not mastered in 1978	76	76	83	79
Mastered in 1978	89	91	86	88
Capitalizes proper nouns				
No rating in 1978	87	91	91	100
Not mastered in 1978	81	100	83	100
Mastered in 1978	98	98	97	94
First word in sentence				
No rating in 1978	100*	---	---	---
Not mastered in 1978	96	100	91	100
Mastered in 1978	97	100	97	98
Pronoun "I"				
No rating in 1978	100*	100*	100*	100*
Not mastered in 1978	100*	100*	---	---
Mastered in 1978	100	99	100	100
Period--end of sentence				
No rating in 1978	100*	---	100*	100*
Not mastered in 1978	56	38	71	75
Mastered in 1978	69	71	94	87
Question Mark				
No rating in 1978	61	67	100*	40*
Not mastered in 1978	63	100	0*	0*
Mastered in 1978	67	100*	---	---

Table 8 (continued)

	Group I	Group II	Group III	Group IV
Comma in series				
No rating in 1978	68	77	81	60*
Not mastered in 1978	92	43	80	0*
Mastered in 1978	89	81	92	70
Comma--nonrestrictive clause				
No rating in 1978	10	17	33	3
Not mastered in 1978	18	23	40	17
Mastered in 1978	37	30	38	55
Comma--compound sentence				
No rating in 1978	28	6	50	28
Not mastered in 1978	17	18	35	41
Mastered in 1978	9	44	38	58
Comma with quotations				
No rating in 1978	55	69	---	50*
Not mastered in 1978	100*	100*	---	---
Mastered in 1978	75*	100*	---	---
Exclamation Mark				
No rating in 1978	95	94	75*	67*
Not mastered in 1978	100*	---	---	---
Mastered	100	100*	---	---
Quotation marks				
No rating in 1978	63	66	50*	67*
Not mastered in 1978	100*	100*	---	---
Mastered in 1978	100*	100*	100*	---
Apostrophe with contractions				
No rating in 1978	80	85	79	70
Not mastered in 1978	87	70	83	83
Mastered in 1978	91	100	88	83
Apostrophe with Possessives				
No rating in 1978	22	42	43	37
Not mastered in 1978	0*	40*	29*	50*
Mastered	33*	50*	50*	100*
Semicolon				
No rating in 1978	0*	33*	33*	100*
Not mastered in 1978	---	---	---	---
Mastered in 1978	---	---	---	---
Colon				
No rating in 1978	77	59	20*	0*
Not mastered in 1978	---	---	---	---
Mastered in 1978	---	---	---	---

Table 8 (continued)

	Group I	Group II	Group III	Group IV
Hyphenated Word				
No rating in 1978	42	60	75*	90
Not mastered in 1978	100*	---	---	---
Mastered in 1978	50	100*	---	---
Hyphen--end of line				
No rating in 1978	90	72	93	93
Not mastered in 1978	80*	83*	100*	100*
Mastered in 1978	100*	88*	80*	100*
Parentheses				
No rating in 1978	91	100	100*	100*
Not mastered in 1978	100*	---	---	---
Mastered in 1978	100*	---	---	---
Underlining				
No rating in 1978				
Not mastered in 1978				
Mastered in 1978				
Headings correct				
No rating in 1978	97	100	84	100
Not mastered in 1978	99	100	87	94
Mastered in 1978	---	---	---	---
Paragraphing				
No rating in 1978	100*	---	---	---
Not mastered in 1978	95	91	85	86
Mastered in 1978	93	95	93	100
Fragments (eliminated)				
No rating in 1978	55	44	63	81
Not mastered in 1978	39	54	65	79
Mastered in 1978	49	52	70	80
Runons (eliminated)				
No rating in 1978	30	37	67	75
Not mastered in 1978	26	33	71	72
Mastered in 1978	30	29	67	68

Table 9
Summary of Strengths and Weaknesses Regarding Retention of Skills and Learning New Skills

Retention	Learning: High (80% above)	Learning: Mod (61% to 79%)	Learning: Low (60% & Below)
HIGH RETENTION (90%) and above	Forms letters Size/alignment Spaces letters Proper Nouns First Word in Sentence Pronoun "I" Exclamation Mark* Parentheses* Paragraphing	Quotation Marks*	
MOD RETENTION (80% to 89%)		Correct slant Question mark* Comma in series Comma with Quotations* Apostrophe with Contractions Hyphenated word*	
LOW RETENTION (Below 80%)			Period at end of sentence Comma--nonrestrictive clauses Comma--compound sentence Apostrophe with possessives Fragments (eliminated) Runons (eliminated)

*Based on scant information

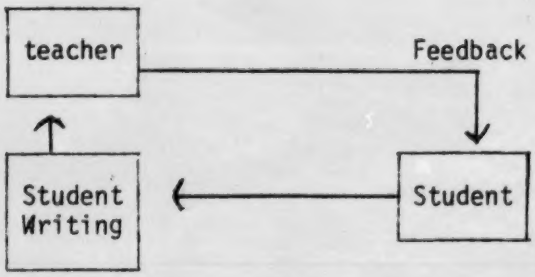

Figure 1

A model showing teacher feed back to the student as the basis for writing-skills improvement of elementary school student.

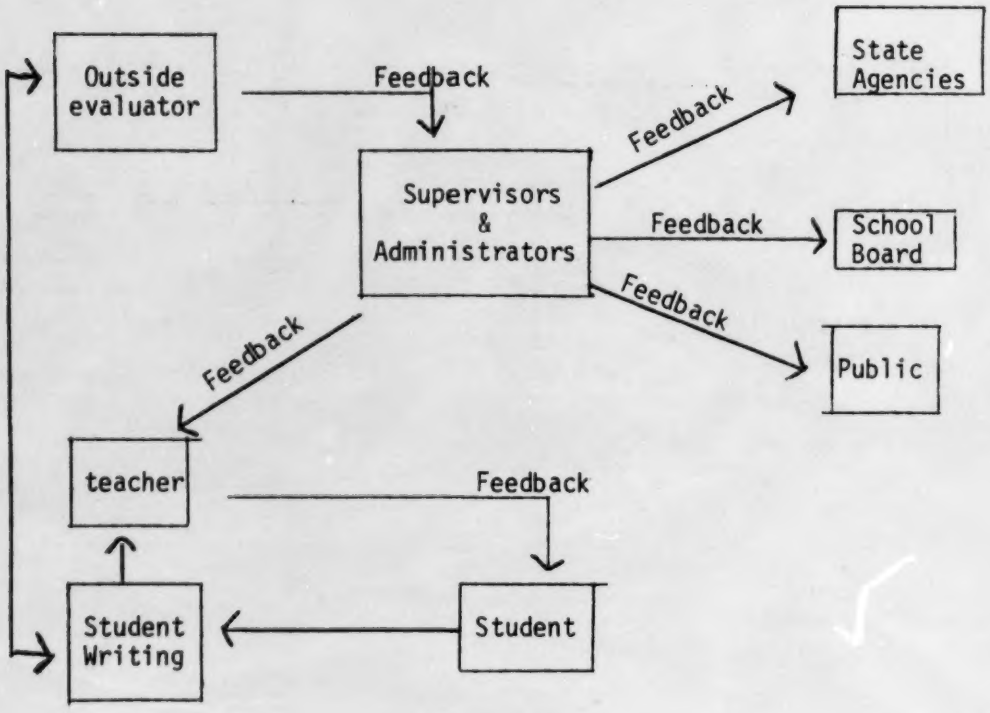

Figure 2

A model showing both direct feedback from the teacher to the student and indirect feedback from outside evaluators to improve the writing skills of elementary school students.

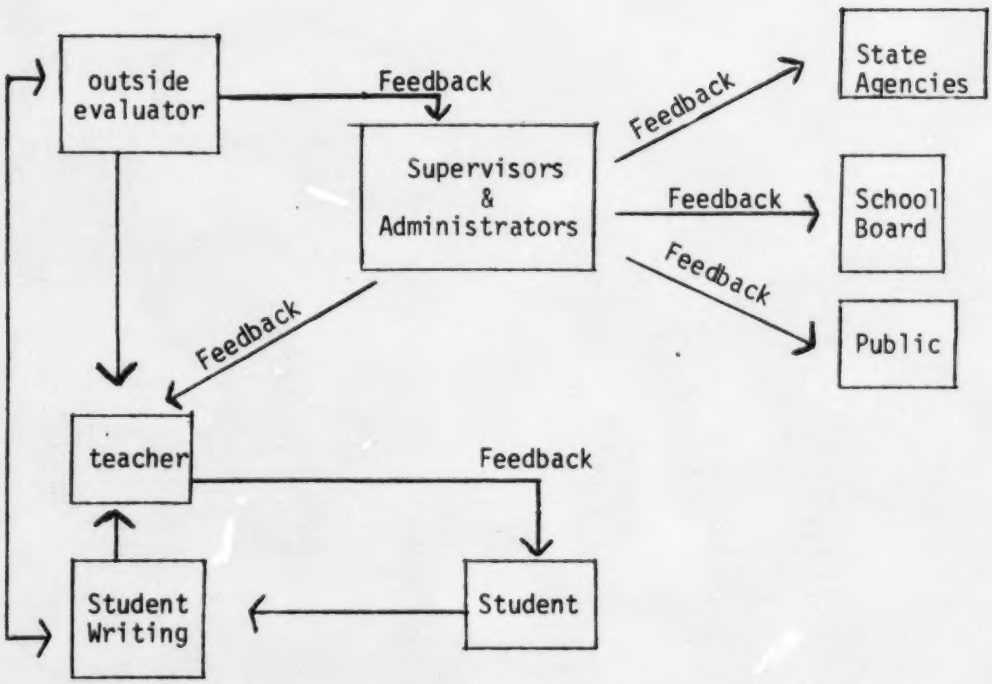

Figure 3

A model showing intensive feedback to stimulate writing-skills improvement.

APPENDIX A

Scorer _ _ _ Word Count ___ Student Number _ _ _ _ _ _

GENERAL MERIT

	Low	Middle			High	
Ideas	2	4	6	8	10	
Organization	2	4	6	8	10	
Wording	1	2	3	4	5	Total, GENERAL MERIT _____
Flavor	1	2	3	4	5	
SENTENCE STRUCTURE	2	4	6	8	10	SENTENCE STRUCTURE _____
USAGE	1	2	3	4	5	USAGE _____
TRANSCRIBING, MECHANICS						
Punctuation	1	2	3	4	5	
Capitalization	1	2	3	4	5	Total, TRANSCRIBING, MECHANICS _____
Spelling	1	2	3	4	5	
Handwriting, Appearance	1	2	3	4	5	

COUNTS OF T-UNITS, SENTENCES, WORDS

T-UNITS: Tallies _____ Total _____

WORDS (Number of Words, Excluding Title) Total _____

REAL SENTENCES Tallies _____ Total _____

WRITER'S SENTENCES Tallies _____ Total _____

If Fragments are present, circle F at right. F
If Run-ons are present, circle R at Right. R
(Same paper may contain both Fragments and Run-ons.)

APPENDIX A

NOTES ON BUILDING-CENTERED TESTING PROGRAMS IN WRITING

The holistic scale below, developed by Paul Diederich, is described at length in Measuring Growth in English. This scale is one approach among many that might be used at the building level. Holistic approaches that use a single numerical scale rather than numerous categories are available. (Primary trait rating is growing in popularity as an approach to evaluation.) Some benefits of a Diederich-like scale (which can be altered to include different categories like "sentence structure" and alternate wordings to replace the infelicitous "flavor") are: the categories call teachers' attention to conceptual as well as mechanical aspects of student writing; the former aspects are given greater weight; in-service sessions can be built around the categories selected; carryover into actual instruction appears to be strong. Disadvantages include a lack of specification of the kind of writing being assessed and of the essential elements in that kind of writing; the danger of successive writing-test assignments exemplifying different kinds of writing--thus resulting in a comparison of apples and elephants.

The Cooper article is the shortest and most concise summary of the Diederich method. The Monroe article is a review of Diederich's book. The Suhor paper reports on an attempt to use the Diederich method to develop a building-centered testing program in several secondary schools.

Reader's Scale

Reader No. _____ Paper 6 Digit No. _____

(circle one)	Low		Middle		High	
Ideas	2	4	6	8	10	
Organization	2	4	6	8	10	
Wording	1	2	3	4	5	
Flavor	1	2	3	4	5	
						_____
Usage	1	2	3	4	5	
Punctuation	1	2	3	4	5	
Spelling	1	2	3	4	5	
Handwriting	1	2	3	4	5	
						_____
					sum	_____

Cooper, Charles. "Measuring Growth in Writing," in "Research Roundup" column, C. Cooper, ed. English Journal (March, 1975) pp. 111-117.

Diederich, Paul. Measuring Growth in English. Urbana, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1974.

Monroe, Betty. "Review: The Measurement of English." in "Professional Publications" . column, C. Suhor, ed. English Journal (March, 1975), 99-100.

Suhor, Charles. "Mass Testing in Composition: Is It Worth Doing Badly?" New Orleans Public Schools, 1977. (ERIC: ED 147807).

APPENDIX B

WRITING SKILLS CHECK LIST ID _____

	Rough	Final	In-Class
I. HANDWRITING A. Manuscript Writing 1. Write correctly all small and capital letters.			
2. Consistently form letters in the correct way--correct starting points, direction of lines, etc.			
3. Make letters uniform in size and appropriate in size, height, etc.			
4. Use correct spacings between letters, between words, and between sentences, so writing is easy to read.			
B. Cursive 1. Form all cursive letters correctly.			
2. Size/Alignment. a. One-fourth space for small letters.			
b. Three-fourths space for capitals, tall letters.			
c. One-half space below line for looped letters.			
d. Rest letters on line, not below or above.			
3. Spacings Spaces between letters, between words, and between sentences are such that writing is easy to read.			
4. Slant Use consistently the same slant. Forward slant is preferred but backward slant or vertical letters are acceptable.			
II. CAPITALIZATION A. Capitalize proper nouns.			
B. Capitalize first word in a sentence.			
C. Capitalize the word I.			
D. Capitalize titles of persons--Mr., President, Judge, etc. used with their names.			
E. Capitalize initials.			

Page 2	Rough	Final	In-Class
F. Capitalize names of holidays, months, and days of the week.			
G. Capitalize main words in titles of books, stories, songs, programs, exhibits, displays, etc.			
H. Capitalize the first word in each line of poetry.			
III. PUNCTUATION A. Period--use: 1. To end a sentence unless question mark or exclamation mark is appropriate.			
2. After each initial.			
3. After abbreviation, except an acronym treated as a word--CARE, UNESCO, etc.			
4. After Roman numerals, numerals, and letters in an outline or list.			
B. Question mark. Use at the end of any sentence, word or phrase to be read as a single utterance with questioning intonation.			
C. Comma, use: 1. Between words in a series.			
2. Before the year in writing a date, and also after the year within a sentence.			
3. Between items in writing the name of a city and state, country, etc.			
4. To separate name used in direct address--after, before, or before and after, depending on placement in a sentence.			
5. To signal natural pauses within sentences--to set off non-restrictive, explanatory, non-essential words, (such as appositives), phrases, clauses.			
6. Following greeting and closing in an informal letter.			
7. To signal a natural pause between parts of a compound sentence.			
8. In writing direct quotations--			
a. After last word preceding a direct quote within a sentence.			

	Rough	Final	In-Class
b. Inside the second quotation mark if other punctuation is not indicated.			
D. Exclamation mark Use after sentence or segment punctuated as a sentence to signal strong feeling.			
E. Quotation marks 1. Use to enclose exact words of a speaker.			
2. Use to enclose titles of stories, plays, poems, songs, compositions, reports, etc. (other than full-length books) in sentences.			
3. Use to enclose word or phrase when the writer means "so-called" The "shower" became an all day rain.			
4. Use single quotation marks ('....') to enclose a quotation within a quotation--"The teacher said 'Stop that!' three times" warned Jack.			
F. Apostrophe 1. Use in writing contractions.			
2. Use in writing possessives--'s and s'.			
3. Use in writing plurals of symbols--A's, +'s, etc.			
4. To show that a letter or letters have been omitted, in words other than contractions.			
G. Semicolon 1. Use between parts of a compound sentence instead of a comma when conjunction is omitted. Birds fly south in winter; other animals stay in the same place all year.			
2. Use to separate items in a series when the items have commas within them-- ...Mary Smith, Lincoln School; Sam Brown, Johnston School; Ruby Jones, Orchard Park School.			
H. Colon 1. Use in writing time--10:25.			
2. Use after the greeting in a business letter.			
3. Use following words introducing a list, to mean as follows--Homes are built of various materials: Wood, stone, brick, stucco, concrete, even mud.			

	Rough	Final	In-Class
4. Use following the name of a speaker in writing dialogue as in a play script or picture caption. FRANK: Where are my shoes?			
I. Hyphen 1. Use in spelling hyphenated words--first-rate.			
2. Use in writing numerals or franctions in words--twenty-five, one-third.			
3. Use to divide a word between syllables at the end of a line of writing.			
4. To indicate letter by letter spelling in writing--h-y-p-h-e-n.			
J. Dash--(two hyphens in typewriting) 1. Use to signal a longer-than-usual pause setting off "tucked in" or explanatory material--an exaggerated comma.			
2. Use to signal a dramatic pause before special emphasis. There it was--the treasure!			
3. To denote halting speech--"I--can't--make--it," gasped Tom.			
4. To indicate that speech is broken off abruptly or interrupted.			
K. Parentheses Use to enclose an aside to the reader--an explanation, comment, definition. We ate bread (stale) and beans (cold) and liked them. A ferret (small weasel-like animal) can be trained to chase animals from dens and burrows.			
L. Underlining 1. Underline title of a book when written within a sentence. I read Black Beauty in one day.			
2. To indicate extra stress on a word: I did not miss second base.			
M. Ellipsis 1. Use to indicate that something is omitted as within a quotation.			
2. Use to show that a sentence is unfinished and trails off rather than is sharply cut off.			
IV. FORM FOR COMPOSITIONS A. Write name on top line, extreme right.			
B. Write date on top line, extreme left.			
C. Write composition title on second line, centered.			

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	Rough	Final	In-Class
D. Begin composition on third line.			
E. Leave full one-inch margin, left and right, for body of composition.			
F. Indent each paragraph one half-inch.			
V. SENTENCE STRUCTURE			
A. Simple			
B. Compound			
C. Complex			
D. Compound Complex			
VI. NUMBER OF PARAGRAPHS			
VII. NUMBER OF WORDS			
VIII. SPELLING ERRORS			
A. On list			
B. Beyond list			
IX. VOCABULARY WORDS BEYOND LIST			
X. TYPE OF WRITING (SELECT ONE)			
1. Imaginative Story			
2. Factual Story			
3. Poem			
4. Letter			
5. Play			
6. Persuasive essay			
7. Expository			
8. Other (Indicate)			

APPENDIX C

Folder _____
In-Class _____

ID _____

WRITING SKILLS CHECK LIST

	Mastery	Non-Mastery	NA
1. HANDWRITING Indicator Manuscript _____ Cursive _____			
A. Form all letters correctly			
B. Size/Alignment correct			
C. Spacings Spaces between letters, between words, and between sentences are such that writing is easy to read.			
D. Slant (Cursive only) Use consistently the same slant. Forward slant is preferred but backward slant or vertical letters are acceptable			
2. CAPITALIZATION			
A. Capitalize proper nouns			
B. Capitalize first word in a sentence			
C. Capitalize the word I			
3. PUNCTUATION			
A. Period--use: To end a sentence unless question mark or exclamation mark is appropriate			
B. Question mark			
C. Comma, use:			
1. Between words in a series			
2. To signal natural pauses within sentences--to set off non-restrictive, explanatory, non-essential words, (such as appositives), phrases, clauses			
3. To signal a natural pause between parts of a compound sentence			
4. In writing direct quotations			

	Mastery	Non-Mastery	NA
Exclamation mark			
Quotation marks			
Apostrophe			
1. Use in writing contractions			
2. Use in writing possessives--'s and s'.			
G. Semicolon			
H. Colon			
I. Hyphen			
1. Use in spelling hyphenated words--first-rate			
2. Use to divide a word between syllables at the end of a line of writing			
3. To indicate letter by letter spelling in writing--h-y-p-h-e-n			
J. Parentheses			
K. Underlining			
4. FORMAT			
A. Headings			
B. Paragraphing and Indentations			
5. SENTENCE STRUCTURE			

	Yes	No
Are there sentence fragments?		
Are there sentence run-ons?		

6. NUMBER OF WORDS

7. SPELLING ERRORS*
   A. On list
   B. Beyond list

8. VOCABULARY WORDS BEYOND LIST**

9. TYPE OF WRITING (SELECT ONE)

A. Imaginative Story	E. Play
B. Factual Story	F. Persuasive essay
C. Poem	G. Expository
D. Letter	H. Other (Indicate)

* In entire composition

**Used at least once in the first 50 words of the essay.